

VeAhavta Sri Lanka

Volume 1, Issue 2

May 15, 2002

Facts About Sri Lanka:

- Sri Lanka gained independence from British rule in 1948; originally named "Ceylon," the name of the country was changed to "Sri Lanka" in 1972
- Form of Government: Republic with unicameral Parliament & president elected by popular vote
- Population: Singhalese - 74%; Tamils - 18%; Moor - 8% (Source: CIA World Factbook)
- Religion: Buddhist - 70%; Hindu - 15%; Christian - 8%; Muslim - 7% (Source: CIA World Factbook) According to the Constitution of Sri Lanka the state is required to "protect and foster" Buddhism, "while giving adequate protection to all religions" (Const., Ch. 2, Art. 7)
- Since 1983, Sri Lanka has been plunged in a civil war with ethnic & religious dimensions that has left approximately 100,000 dead
- The warring groups are the Singhalese, most of whom are Buddhists, and the Tamils, who are mostly Hindus
- It is estimated that there are approximately 70,000 orphaned children in Sri Lanka today

Rev. Jeyanesan Speaks During North American Tour

VeAhavta's first "Third World Clerics Speaking Tour" in North America took place between February 23 and March 25, 2002 and featured Rev. Salvadurai Jeyanesan of Sri Lanka and his wife Shantha. During the one-month tour Rev. & Mrs. Jeyanesan spoke to congregations, clubs, study groups and at special receptions in Redlands and San Luis Obispo, California; Dayton, Ohio; Indianapolis, Indiana; and Toronto, Canada. Rev. Jeyanesan challenged his listeners to ask themselves the questions, "What is the mission of the Church?" and "What am I doing to help

fulfill that mission?" What follows are some highlights from his sermons and talks. *On the Church & the Poor:* "The ministry of Christ in the Church cannot avoid the poor. The risen Christ sits at the right hand of the Father, but he personally identifies with the down-trodden and oppressed, the forgotten of society. In describing the last judgment, Jesus spoke metaphorically about sheep and goats. He indicated that peoples' eternal fate would hinge upon how they responded to a hungry man, a thirsty woman, a runaway teenager, a half-naked beggar, a dying patient, and a prisoner.

Jesus so identified with these people that to turn away from one of them was to turn away from the Son of Man. Because of Jesus' words in Luke 4 and Matthew 25, the destinies of the Church and the poor are forever intertwined. True, pure ministry of the Church is reflected in its effort to serve the poor. If we are to be followers of Christ, we need to do similar things as Jesus did. This can only be achieved by seeking God's kingdom, by making it our chief priority in life. We must assume a posture ready for action. Often Jesus spoke of those 'who do my words.' Our deeds are very important.

(See, *REV. JEY*, p. 2)

Daycare Opens At Grace Church Care Center

At the beginning of this year, the Grace Church Care Center in Trincomalee started providing free daycare services for children living in the refugee camp adjacent



Prayer Service and Dedication at Grace Church Care Center

to the property. The daycare facility offers parents an opportunity to work, or look for work, knowing that their children are safe. VeAhavta contributed the funds needed to purchase the equipment to begin providing the

(See, *DAYCARE*, page 2)

Inside this issue:

Grace Church Care Center Fundraising Update	3
Seller Donates Property Adjacent to Care Center	3
Sponsor a Child, Save a Life	3
How You Can Help	4

REV. JEY

Works are the fruit of faith. When we have a clear vision of his kingdom, when we work hard for the sake of his kingdom, when we become obedient to Jesus' teachings, then God's name is made holy among the nations (Ez. 36:23; 38:23), then his kingdom increases among people, then his will is done on earth." **On the Kingdom of God:** "The Kingdom of God is almost the sole preoccupation of Jesus. The Kingdom of God for Jesus is a project, not a concept.

It is an enterprise, not a dream. It is a deal, a contract, not just pious talk or religious platitude. Our world today, as in the world in which Jesus lived, is not short of 'the poor' – there are more than three billion of them – but there is a terrible shortage of 'the poor in spirit.' This is why the rule of God remains little more than jargon, a castle in the air, a religious fantasy. This is why an 'abundant life' remains something 'to be desired but not to be attained.' For Jesus 'abundant life' is nothing other than the rule of God. Is it possible for us in the coming days to get many of 'the poor in spirit' to join Jesus' project and enterprise of God's rule? Then, and only then, we can say with Jesus from the bottom of our hearts: 'The time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God has come near' (Mark 1:14). **On Prayer:** "If only our lips move, and our hearts re-



Rev. & Mrs. Jeyanesan and their "niece,"
Laurel Parkinson

main unmoved, our hands will remain idle and our feet planted. If this describes the way we pray, then our words may resemble less a prayer and more a mantra – a 'magical formula' that is chanted over and over. Prayer is more than moving lips and vocalizing words. It should stir our hearts in a way that causes us to be doers of Jesus' words and God's will. Does God only have ears? He also has eyes. He watches our conduct. He sees our attitude toward others, whether we are generous or stingy, merciful or callous. He takes note when we encounter those in need, whether

we assist them or turn away. God wants us to pray not only with our lips, but also with our heart, with our hands and with our feet." **On the Need for Personal Sacrifice:** "As a result of what I have seen, I can only conclude that without personal sacrifice and risk there is no power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bring about change. This simple observation may be vital for the spreading of the Christian faith. At the start of the Christian era, each of the twelve apostles made personal sacrifices and took risks for the sake of facilitating the spreading of the Gospel. I am convinced that without

painful obedience and personal sacrifice, the expansion of God's Kingdom among people is hindered. When Jesus' followers are obedient and make difficult personal sacrifices, then God's Kingdom expands, and sometimes that expansion can be quite dramatic. God empowered Jesus through the Holy Spirit to carry out his mission – to bring the Gospel to the poor, to bring release to captives, to bring new vision to the blind, to bring liberty to the oppressed – in essence, to proclaim to suffering humanity God's favorable intentions. Jesus is the light of the world. He radiates righteousness, justice, truth, peace and love. Jesus desires us to reflect his light. He is a strong beacon, and we are like many candles. Throughout the world people are suffering. Women are the victims of domestic violence, forced marriages, and rape. Many peasants, migrant workers, and day laborers are being oppressed and exploited.



Rev. Jeyanesan speaks to children at Grace Church, San Luis Obispo, California

Many old people and others with physical disabilities are being neglected. Children, too, are suffering. In East Asia, child prostitution is a thriving business. Such people long for the day of 'release' and being 'set free' (Lk. 4:18). They are longing to know about God's favor toward them. It is into these dark places that we must go. Jesus is calling us, 'Reflect my righteousness, my justice, my truth, my peace and my love. Dispel the darkness! Arise and Shine!'

DAYCARE

service, including kitchen equipment so that the small Care Center staff could provide one meal a day to each of the attending children. The daycare facility was officially opened with a prayer and dedica-

tion service led by Rev. S. Jeyanesan and attended by other pastors and community leaders in the newly renovated church building located on the property. As of this printing, 67 children are receiving

daycare everyday at the Care Center. If you would like to help us with this important project, please designate your donations to the "Grace Church Daycare Facility Operating Fund."

Grace Church Care Center Fundraising Update

VeAhavta had until April 18, 2002 (extended by the seller from April 6) to raise all of the funds necessary to complete the



Boys from the St. John's Vocational Training Center clearing brush at Grace Church Care Center

purchase of the property in Trincomalee that will house the Grace Church Care Center. The total amount needed to purchase the property was 25 million Rupees (about \$270,000) and an additional \$16,000 was needed to repair the approximately 15,000 square feet of buildings on the property. VeAhavta was able to collect approximately one-half of the necessary donations by the April 18 deadline but was forced to borrow the additional \$150,000 that was needed. A



Repairs to the Grace Church Care Center

few donors have graciously agreed to pay all interest on the loan so that no future donations to VeAhavta will be used for the payment of any interest. So although the property has been purchased and repairs to the property are nearly complete, we still need to raise an additional \$150,000 to repay the loan within one year. We need your help now more than ever – the sooner the loan is repaid, the less interest will have to be paid. Please send your donations to VeAhavta and designate them for the “Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Property Acquisition Fund.” Please help us to show the love of the Lord to the many orphans and widows in Sri Lanka who desperately need our help.

Seller of Trincomalee Donates Property Adjacent to Grace Church Care Center

Mr. Jeganathan Jeyabalan, the seller of the property in Trincomalee that is now home to the Grace Church Care Center, donated two additional pieces of property to the Center on April 18, 2002. The generous gift of the two properties, which adjoin the Grace Church Care Center and together comprise approximately two acres, came as a

complete surprise to VeAhavta. Various ideas have already been proposed for the use of the donated property, including building “safe houses” for widows or a second nutritional feeding center or a special orphanage for children less than three years of age. Our thanks to Mr. Jeyabalan for his most generous gift!

Sponsor a Child, Save a Life

Would you like to change the world? You can you know. If you sponsor a child at the new Grace Church Care Center in Sri Lanka you will literally change the world for an orphaned child and he or she will know that you did it in the name of the Lord. For just \$25 (less than the cost of one night of entertainment in the United States) you can provide for all of the needs of a child in the new orphanage for an entire month, including food, clothing, a safe place to live, a good

education, a sense of hope and purpose, and – most importantly – the assurance that he or she is loved by others and by the Lord. Won't you please show others the love of the Lord by reaching out in a tangible way to make a difference? Will you, like the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), take the time to help others in need instead of walking around them? If it were your child, wouldn't you help? We are in great need of people who are willing to pledge their support for the children. To sponsor a child, use the form on the last page of this news-

letter. Figure the number of children you would like to support, multiply that number by \$25 and enter the total in the space indicated for “Child Sponsorship Fund.” Then return the form with your check payable to “VeAhavta.” We will send you a statement each month for your contributions. Once the Grace Church Care Center officially opens its doors to the orphans, you will be sent a picture and short biography of your sponsored child along with an address you can use to write to him or her. Please help us to save the lives of these children in the name of the Messiah.

VeAhavta

A Nonprofit Corporation

1190 Marsh St., Suite B
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Phone/Fax: 805.542.9357

Watch for our Website: www.you-shall-love.org



How You Can Help
(Please Cut Out This Form And Mail It With Your Donation)

TO: VeAhavta, a Nonprofit Corporation
1190 Marsh Street, Suite B
San Luis Obispo, California 93401

Dear VeAhavta:

I want to help my neighbors — the widows and orphans in Sri Lanka. Enclosed is my donation, payable to “**VeAhavta**,” which I understand is tax deductible.

Please use the enclosed gift as indicated:

\$_____ *Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Property Acquisition Fund*

\$_____ *Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Child Sponsorship Fund*

\$_____ *Sri Lanka Orphans & Widows Project – Grace Church Daycare Facility Operating Fund*

\$_____ *Where needed most*

\$_____ **TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED**

Thank you for caring and giving so that others may know the love of the Lord. Should any fund be oversubscribed, excess funds will be channeled to an equally deserving need unless you indicate otherwise. VeAhavta is a 501(c)(3) registered charity; all donations are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Thank you for your generous support.